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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY

Indochina (Cambodia/Viet Num)

SUBJECT

Friction Between Segments of Indochinese Population

PLACE ACQUIRED (BY SOURCE)

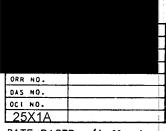
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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION



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- 2. Cambodia is almost entirely agricultural in economy. Rice, timber, pepper, and fish constitute the principal products. The Cambodians are more easy-going than the Vietnamese. They don't like the Vietnamese, who are referred to as the "Nazis of South East Asia" by the Cambodians.
- 3. In the area near Battambang the people are called Issaraks. Up until the time that King Morodom Sihanouk ousted the French from control of the country, there was considerable Viet Minn agitation in the Issarak territory. However, the Issarak declared themselves leval to the king and ordered the Viet Minh people out.
- 4. The Viet Minh troops, attempting to join the Viet Minh in Cochinchina, were badly mauled by French Union troops as they moved out of Cambodia.
- The Issaraks who now consider themselves Cambodians sell an exotic product, the name of which sounds like "cardamones." cardamones is made from a bush something like a juniper, and it is in great demand by the Chinese, who use it as an ingredient in patent medicines.

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- 6. There is a railroad running from Phnom-Penh westward to the Thai border and another railroad running from the border to Bangkok. The two lines are not connected, however; the passengers have to get off one train, walk a quarter of a mile and get on the other train.
- 7. The Cambodian line has all French equipment and rolling stock.
- 8. The Thai line uses US locomotives and Japanese rolling stock, but the track gauge of both the Thai and Cambodian lines is the same. The line in Thailand has better equipment and a smoother roadbed than the line in Cambodia.
- 9. The Cambodian and Thai governments want to link the two lines, but the French oppose the idea. They apparently feel it would mean that goods from Vietnem and Cambodia would be shipped to Bangkok and its free market and out of the French franc area.

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Although the Cambodins how have their own separate army, the French still control the flow of US military supplies coming into Cambodia. The Cambodians do not like this naturally, since it means that the French get all the new US equipment and they get the castefis.

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Despite this situation, French officers sider the Cambodian troops superior to the Vietnamese troops.

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- Apparently one reason for this is that the Cambodians, being racially purer than the Vietnamese | are more even tempered as a group. For example, the men in a Cambodian platoon not only look alike but react alike, whereas a Vietnamese lintoon may be Chinese, Annamese, Tonkinese, plus mixtures of the threa, all reacting differently and disliking each other.
- Pharmaceuticals available in the open market in Vietnam are from France. The French and Vietnamese troops use drugs of packaged as military supplies.
- The Viet Minh use US made pharmaceuticals, packed commercially, which are smuggled in from Thailand. Importers in Bangkok bring in the drugs from the US and sell them to Chinese drugstore owners or others who have some quasilegitimate reason for purchasing pharmaceuticals.
- 15. The Chinese act as middle men; they resell, at a substantial profit, to Viet Minh adherents who take the risks of crossing the border into Laos.
- 16. The big, French family-owned ton and rubber plantation in Vietnam have nearly all passed into the hand, of companies.
- There were over 100 big tea plantations owned by French families before World War II; only six are now still operating under family ownership.
- 18. The situation is the same with regard to the rubber plantations; companies like Bata have taken over management of many of them. A great deal of land that was in either tea or rubber is not being worked at all due to Viet Minh activity or because the French owners have been killed or moved away.
- 19. The Hoa Hao people live along the coast south of Saigon and along the mouths of the Mekong. There are about three million of them and piracy is their chief source of revenue. They exact talks from vessels traveling up the Mekong.
- 20. The French have tried to reform the Hoa Hao by force, or to control them by diplomacy, but without success. They even made the Hoa Hao chief an honorary general, but this does not seem to cave had any effect on the Hoa Hao people. The chief is in his 70's and his influence over the Hoa Hao is waning.
- 21. The Viet Minh made efforts to enlist these people, but the Hoa Hao are not interested in politics. They are only interested in money.
- 22. The Hoa Hao maintain their own army and make their own weapons, including rifles, sub-machine gurs, and machine gurs, all copied from US arms. Although all parts for the weapons are hand made, they work satisfactorily.

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